

I will have more to say later this afternoon, prior to the final vote on the confirmation, but for now I want to thank Chairman DURBIN of the Senate Judiciary Committee for beautifully executing the nomination, all the members of the Judiciary Committee for their thoughtful and respectful—all my Democratic colleagues on the Judiciary Committee for their thoughtful and insightful examination of the judge's record, and I want to thank those Republican Senators who chose to take this process seriously.

So it is truly a joyous day; joyous for the Senate, joyous for the Court, joyous for America.

Let us finish the work today of confirming Judge Jackson, finally, to the Supreme Court of the United States.

PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on the final day of the work period, the Senate is going to pass a much sought after piece of legislation: revoking Russia of permanent normal trade relations with the United States.

The legislation will go a long way to landing a painful, severe blow on Putin's economy. It will hinder his ability to keep funding his war machine, and adds Russia, as well as Belarus, to a list of nations, including North Korea, that are ineligible for free trade with the United States.

I want to thank my colleague from Idaho Senator CRAPO for working so closely with me on into the night last night to make sure that this got done.

We will also vote separately on legislation regarding an oil ban, and I thank my colleagues who worked together to reach a compromise on this measure. We are moving forward today.

Putin must absolutely be held accountable for the detestable and despicable war crimes he is committing against Ukraine.

The images we have seen coming out of that country, most recently out of the town of Bucha, are pure, pure evil—hundreds of civilians murdered in cold blood; dozens of bodies of men, women, children, the elderly, the defenseless; people with hands tied behind their backs and left dead in the streets. Some of the bodies showed signs of torture.

According to a new report by Der Spiegel, German intelligence now believes that some of these murders were discussed by Russian troops over radio intercepts. And why were these people killed? Simply because they were Ukrainians. So many were children, civilians, young people, women. No nation whose military is committing war crimes deserves free-trade status with the United States.

Let me say that again. No nation whose military is committing war crimes deserves free-trade status with the United States.

No vile thug like Putin deserves to stand as an equal with the leaders of

the free world. He is a menace and a pariah who has ensured that his place in history will be one of everlasting shame.

So today's votes approving PNTR revocation are significant. It is very important that the Senate pass this bill, and I want to thank Senator CRAPO as well as Senators MANCHIN and CARDIN and WYDEN and MURKOWSKI and MENENDEZ and all others who worked in good faith with us together on these measures. We wouldn't have reached this outcome without their diligence and good faith.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, I want to close with a few thoughts on what the Senate has accomplished over the past 6 weeks.

There are two words that I believe perfectly summarize the work period we are about to conclude: productive and bipartisan.

In this work period alone, we passed a major postal reform bill over a decade in the making; we passed a bold and robust government funding package, which will help millions of Americans in thousands of different ways; we passed critical emergency aid for the people of Ukraine; we passed the Emmett Till anti-lynching bill after a century of waiting; and topping it all off, we will confirm the 116th Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, before I yield, I also want to applaud the administration's action in extending the pause on payments and interest of Federal student loans. The pandemic continues to impact families economically, and that is why extension is critical for so many borrowers.

And while the extension provides relief, I continue to urge the President to use his existing authority and cancel up to \$50,000 in debt in order to provide immediate relief to millions of borrowers, boost our economic recovery, and help narrow the racial wealth gap in our country.

So it has been a very busy April; it has been a very busy March work period, and when we come back in May, it is going to be very busy again. We have a whole lot to do.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the follow nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am going to be very brief, and I want to echo what the majority leader said, particularly with respect to revoking permanent normal trade relations with Russia.

The Senate, and those who are following this, should understand that in just a few minutes, the Senate is going to take another crucial step in bringing every tool of economic pressure to bear on Vladimir Putin and his oligarch allies. Ending normal trade relations hammers home that Putin has made Russia into a full-fledged pariah state.

As the leader noted, Americans have been watching these atrocities—these brutal acts perpetrated by Vladimir Putin—day after day—on TV, phones, and the like—and now the Senate is saying “there is going to be clear, clear, clear evidence that what he has done has forfeited the right to normal trade relations.”

And I will just wrap up by way of saying that when we get done, on the Senate Finance Committee, we are going to continue to work in a bipartisan way to send Putin additional messages that are going to rein in his economic power.

In particular, I think it is high time to take away the subsidies he gets from American taxpayers for his war machine. That happens when you have American companies doing business in Russia. They pay taxes to the Russian Government, and they get foreign tax credits. I don't believe the people of Michigan or Oregon or anywhere else believe that their tax dollars—their hard-earned tax dollars—should be used to subsidize Putin's war machine.

So this is a very important step today towards making sure, as I indicated, we are putting in place every single economic tool to hammer Putin and his oligarchs.

I urge my colleagues, as Senator SCHUMER has just done, to vote yes, and I also want to thank the ranking member of the Finance Committee. I talked to him a few minutes ago. He continues to do everything he can, every step of the way, to make this a bipartisan effort.

That is the message we ought to send. I urge colleagues to vote yes when we take away normal trade relations from Russia here in a few minutes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL (Ms. ROSEN). Madam President, I ask unanimous

consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, here is a quote from Candidate Biden's campaign website in 2020:

The U.S. has a right and a duty to secure our borders and protect our people against threats.

Well, that was then; this is now.

The Biden administration's weak border policies set a new record in 2021. Customs and Border Protection had to make—listen to this—2 million—2 million—arrests, and it doesn't appear that that new record will last long; 2022 is already trending even worse.

CBP is currently seeing about 7,000 encounters every single day, and they fear they could see as many as 18,000 per day—a truly staggering figure.

To put this in perspective, President Obama's former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson has reflected that a daily count above 1,000—above 1,000—was “a relatively bad number, and I was gonna be in a bad mood the whole day,” reflecting back on his experience.

Now we are at seven times that figure and still climbing. It is a President's responsibility to fix this crisis, but this President is taking major steps to make it even worse.

The Biden administration has announced they will cancel legal authorities that have helped CBP contend with these massive surges. A group of States led by Arizona have explained in court that title 42 is “the only safety valve preventing this Administration's disastrous border policies from devolving into an unmitigated catastrophe.”

The administration's attempts to explain why they are caving to the far left and throwing our borders open make no sense whatsoever. The White House keeps claiming this is a public health decision; they cannot keep title 42—leading you to ask, why?

Democrats don't act like they think COVID is finished. They give speeches daily about the need for more funding. They say we should be sending health assistance around the rest of the world. The only place on the planet where Democrats say COVID is over apparently is at our southern border.

A growing number of House and Senate Democrats have expressed concern and anger over President Biden's awful decision. But press releases are one thing. What matters is how people vote.

Senate Democrats have taken every meaningful opportunity to back the administration's border policies and vote down Republican efforts to improve security. Their votes have helped create this mess. We will see if they finally change course and begin voting to help Republicans end the crisis instead.

BUDGET

Madam President, now on another matter, last week, President Biden re-

leased his budget request for next year. The President got to take a blank canvas and sketch his policy vision for the country. But in the critical area of defending our Nation, the President's vision came up way, way short.

Even amidst a hot war in Europe, bipartisan recognition of threats from China, North Korean nuclear and missile proliferation, and Iran's nuclear, missile, and terrorism trifecta, President Biden proposes to underfund our Armed Forces.

Even if Democrats manage to magically get their runaway inflation under control faster than anyone predicts, their proposal would only flat-fund defense. While China keeps ramping their military spending way up, the Biden budget would have America treading water, at best. More likely, if Democrats' high inflation sticks around, the President's proposal would actually cut the military's purchasing power.

As we speak, Secretary Austin, General Milley, and DOD Comptroller Michael McCord are testifying before the Armed Services Committee to provide some answers about their boss's baffling budget request. These senior leaders have a responsibility to be strong advocates within the administration for the resources that our servicemembers actually need.

When the far-left wanted President Obama to slash military spending, Secretary Leon Panetta waged an impassioned public and private campaign to stick up for our national defense. But if Secretary Austin is advocating for the military's bottom line, he is not doing it very effectively. The administration's proposed defense increase of 4 percent before inflation doesn't come anywhere near meeting our military's requirements to compete with China and preserve peace well into the future.

Yet the same budget lavishes a gigantic—gigantic—14-percent increase on domestic discretionary spending. If our colleague Chairman SANDERS wrote a budget and gave the Pentagon zero input or influence, it might not look much different than the administration's actual product.

So, the world is a dangerous place. China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and other adversaries remind us of this basic fact every single day. Our Commander in Chief needs to get with the program.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Madam President, now, on one final matter. The last few weeks have confirmed a pattern that has played out repeatedly in recent decades. When Republican Presidents make Supreme Court nominations, the far-left and the media melt down. Absurd allegations, conspiracy theories, cheap gimmicks, and apocalyptic rhetoric are all guaranteed. But when Democratic Presidents make nominations, Senate Republicans inquire about past rulings and judicial philosophies, and the country gets the serious process it deserves.

On Tuesday, I explained how 30 years of escalation by Democrats ushered in

this assertive period for the Senate regarding judicial nominations. Now and for the foreseeable future, the Senate views itself as a co-partner in the process.

On Wednesday, I walked through Judge Jackson's long and disturbing record of using judicial activism to go soft on crime. Today, I need to discuss how these disagreements affect the very bedrock of our Republic.

For multiple years now, the Democratic Party has waged an aggressive campaign to bully our independent justice system and attack the legitimacy of their institution. When the plain text of our laws and Constitution disappoint liberals' policy preferences, they mount radical campaigns to wreck the Court itself. This civic cancer began on the fringe, but it has quickly metastasized throughout their party.

Three years ago, sitting Senate Democrats sent the Court an absurd amicus brief, threatening retribution for a certain ruling. Two years ago, the Democratic leader rallied with radicals on the Court's steps and threatened multiple Justices by name if they didn't produce the policy result he preferred.

Last year, when fringe activists wanted to dig up the discredited concept of partisan court packing, President Biden lent it legitimacy with a Presidential commission. Now, just recently, the Senate Democratic whip said that his side's court-packing proposals don't matter because they lack 60 votes to pass the Senate. Well, that was cold comfort considering the Senator just voted to destroy the 60-vote threshold a few months back.

So this nomination has occurred against a strange, strange backdrop. The Senate Democrats, who spent weeks—weeks—fulsomely praising Judge Jackson, have spent years attacking her soon-to-be workplace.

This is why I needed to hear Judge Jackson denounce court packing. Justices Ginsburg and Breyer had no trouble—none—condemning these schemes loudly as sitting Justices. Surely President Biden could find himself an institutionalist in their mold.

But, alas, Judge Jackson was the court packers' favorite pick for the vacancy, and she refused to follow the Ginsburg-Breyer model. She signaled the opposite. She said she would be “thrilled to be one of however many”—“one of however many.”

The left's escalating war against the judiciary is a symptom of a profound misunderstanding. Judicial activism sees the Court as a third legislature. The left wants one policymaking body with 435 Members, one with 100, and one that consists of nine lawyers.

Let me say that again.

The left wants one policymaking body with 435 Members, one with 100, and one that consists of nine lawyers. That isn't what the Founders created, and it is not what the American people signed up for.